

Reply by the Hon'ble Acting Chief Justice to the Welcome Address

Vanakkam.

My esteemed Brother and Sister Judges, the Additional Advocate General, President and other Office bearers of the various advocates associations, Senior Advocates, members from the Bar, Judicial Officers, Officers and staff of the High Court Registry, ladies and gentlemen,

I am deeply touched by the kind words showered on me by previous speakers and I am grateful to them. I value very much the tribute coming from the Bar.

I am not new to this Temple city. I had visited Madurai couple of years back though I am visiting the Madurai Bench for the first time, which is having an imposing structure surrounded by lush green meadows. From a book, which I happened to come across recently, I learnt that the Judiciary of Madurai, in ancient times, had the attributes of modern jurisprudence, such as right of person to appear party in person etc. 'Silapathikaram' one of the five major classics of Tamil, narrates how Kannagi personally appeared before the Court of Pandya Emperor at Madurai, with available material object of an anklet, to appeal against capital punishment imposed on her husband and established the miscarriage of justice in convicting her innocent husband, as a result of which, the Emperor fell down from the throne, heart-broken and sacrificed his life for the cause of justice.

A lawyer is an officer of the Court. He is to assist the Court in the administration of justice. Without the assistance of able and competent

lawyers, the task of we the Judges becomes very difficult. The Madurai Bar has so many good and efficient lawyers. Though the Bar at Madurai Bench has not yet completed ten years but I hope that they will not leave any stone unturned to set an example for others in the judicial fraternity and the rest of the country follows its high tradition and learning.

Mr. Justice M.C. Chagla, the famous jurist, had once said that in every case a judge hears, he has to bear in mind the majesty of the law, the contribution that it can make to the betterment to the society and the protection it can give to the humble and weak who is pitted against the rich and the powerful. Humility is the most essential element of a Judge and he has to take note of the common man's sense of justice and not merely be a slave of logic and the letter of the law. Judiciary is the last resort of an innocent man who is accused of an offence as also of a person whose rights have been infringed.

The Madras High Court had a hoary tradition and many famous and eminent jurists had adorned its Bench. I am proud to be associated with this great institution.

In the end, I would only say that I shall try my best to be a part in upholding the high traditions of this Court, and hope that we will, together, continue on this path to progress.

Nandri. Vanakkam.